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ABSTRACT

This report updates information on a previous synthesis of information currently available on the development of educational outcomes and a system of indicators for students with disabilities. Specifically, it provides information on the key national policy groups involved in outcomes-related activities and on key reports that have been produced during the past year. Noted is a trend away from complaints about the status of education toward identification of educational standards, the consideration of national standards and testing, and the investigation of alternative approaches to assessment. In some cases special education was identified as having a leadership role to fulfill in suggested educational reforms. Activities of 15 groups are then individually summarized followed by summaries of 15 major reports issues in 1991. These covered such areas as: state indicators of science and mathematics education; improving the National Education Data System; an examination of what the world of work requires of schools; the National Education Goals Report for 1991; a standardized tests and testing reform; and a system for teaching and assessing employability skills. Appended is the text of congressional testimony by the Council for Exceptional Children on the work of the National Council on Education Standards and Testing and testimony of the National Center on Educational Outcomes to the National Education Goals Panel. (23 references) (DB)

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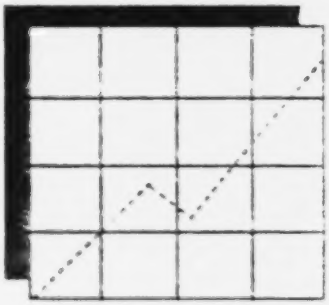

Synthesis Report Update 1992: Policy Groups and Reports on Assessing Educational Outcomes

National Center on Educational Outcomes

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
College of Education

in collaboration with

St. Cloud State University
and
National Association of State Directors of Special Education

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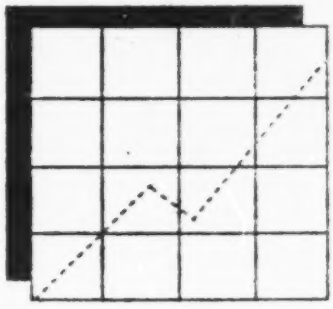

Synthesis Report Update 1992: Policy Groups and Reports on Assessing Educational Outcomes

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National Center on Educational Outcomes

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
College of Education

April, 1992

The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) was established in October, 1990 to work with state departments of education, national policy-making groups, and others to facilitate and enrich the development and use of indicators of educational outcomes for students with disabilities. It is believed that responsible use of such indicators will enable students with disabilities to achieve better results from their educational experiences. The Center represents a collaborative effort of the University of Minnesota, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, and St. Cloud State University.

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Policy Groups and Reports on Assessing Educational Outcomes

Overview

The 1980s were a time of tremendous activity in the educational community. Much of the activity was generated by "outsiders," by businesses and policy groups concerned about the condition of American education. By the end of the decade, the President and state governors together had created an agenda for education, with a vision and goals for the nation's educational system.

The flurry of activity started in the 1980s has continued into the 1990s, with increasing numbers of policy groups playing a part and being formed to help save our nation by restructuring and rejuvenating education. To a great extent, most of the activity that occurred during the 1980s focused on education in general. Sometimes, specific mention was made of students who were disadvantaged, from varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and at risk for failure in the educational system.

Students with disabilities typically were not mentioned, nor was special education, in discussions of the ills of education (NCEO, 1991). Yet, there was concern that the failure to mention students with disabilities in part reflected a belief that special education was a separate system and not the concern or responsibility of education in general. As the nation began to move toward a focus on the results of education and the development of performance standards, it appeared that students with disabilities were not being considered (NCEO, 1991).

Within this context, the **National Center on Educational Outcomes** (NCEO) for Students with Disabilities was established. It is working with national policy-making groups, state departments of education, and other groups as it seeks to promote national discussion of educational goals and indicators of educational outcomes that are inclusive of students with disabilities. Specifically, the mission of the Center is to:

> work with federal and state agencies to facilitate and enrich the development and use of indicators of educational outcomes for students with disabilities. Responsible use of such indicators will enable those students to achieve better results from their educational experiences.

Four major goals direct NCEO activities:

Goal 1: NCEO will promote the development of a comprehensive system of indicators appropriate for use with all students including those with disabilities.

Goal 2: NCEO will support and enhance the measurement of educational outcomes/indicators for students with disabilities.

Goal 3: NCEO will enhance the availability and use of outcomes information in decision making at the federal and state level.

Goal 4: NCEO will identify and develop indicators that can be used to make judgments about the extent to which education works for students with disabilities, and that can be used to improve programs and services to achieve better results for students with disabilities.

Toward meeting its mission and the four defined goals, the Center has been involved in a number of major activities, including the development of a model and indicators of outcomes, surveys of state practice in the assessment of educational outcomes for students with disabilities, evaluations of national standards in light of the needs and characteristics of students with disabilities, and the analysis of existing national and state data bases.

As part of its efforts in each of these areas, NCEO must monitor the current status of major groups that are involved in activities related to defining or assessing educational outcomes. Previously, NCEO produced a synthesis of the literature and state activities related to assessing educational outcomes (NCEO, 1991). That synthesis reviewed educational reform, definitions of key terms, current models of educational indicators in general and special education, the current status of outcomes indicators activities, and several critical issues in the development of a comprehensive system of educational indicators.

The purpose of this document is to provide an update to information presented in the first synthesis report. Specifically, this report provides information on the key national policy groups involved in outcomes-related activities and on key reports that have been produced by these groups and others during the past year.

Key Policy Groups

Activities related to the development of educational indicators, particularly indicators of outcomes, are moving along at increasingly rapid speeds. New groups are formed and new meetings held almost on a daily basis. In this section, we identify several major policy groups involved in some way with national activities related to educational outcomes. A brief review of their activities is provided. Reports that are referred to in this section are described in more detail in the next section of this document (Major Reports Issued in 1991).

The term "policy group" is used broadly here to reflect any group, other than states, attempting to make statements about educational outcomes, standards, or indicators. Most of these groups are at the national level, the level that is the focus of this document. The names by which these groups are most well known are listed here for quick reference in the order in which they are presented:

AAHE	Indicators Panel	NEGP
CCSSO	NAGP	NESAC
CRESST	NAEP	New Standards Project
FairTest	NCES	NGA
Forum	NCEST	SCANS

For the novice, the myriad of organizations taking part in discussions about educational indicators is nearly overwhelming. In order to better understand current activities in this area, it is helpful to have a picture of the major players and their relationships to each other. In Table 1 is presented a listing of some of the major groups, along with their addresses. Some of the major groups and their relationships to each other, or to larger organizations are shown in Figure 1.

Table 1

Major Policy Groups

Group	Address
American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum	One Dupont Circle, Suite 600 Washington, D.C. 20036-1110
Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing	405 Hilgard Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90024
Council of Chief State School Officers	One Massachusetts Ave. NW Suite 700 Washington, D.C. 20001-1431
National Assessment Governing Board	1100 Street, NW Suite 7322 Washington, D.C. 20005-4013
National Association of State Boards of Education, Special Education Study Group	1012 Cameron Street Alexandria, VA 22314
National Center for Education Statistics	555 New Jersey Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20208
National Center for Fair and Open Testing	342 Broadway Cambridge, MA 02139
National Council on Education Standards and Testing	1850 M Street, NW, Suite 1050 Washington, D.C. 20036
National Education Goals Panel	1850 M Street, NW, Suite 270 Washington, D.C. 20036
National Education Standards and Assessments Council	Currently Being Established
National Forum on Educational Statistics	555 New Jersey Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20208
National Governors' Association	444 North Capital Street Washington, D.C. 20001-1572
New Standards Project	1341 G Street, NW Suite 1020 Washington, D.C. 20005
Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills	200 Constitution Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20210

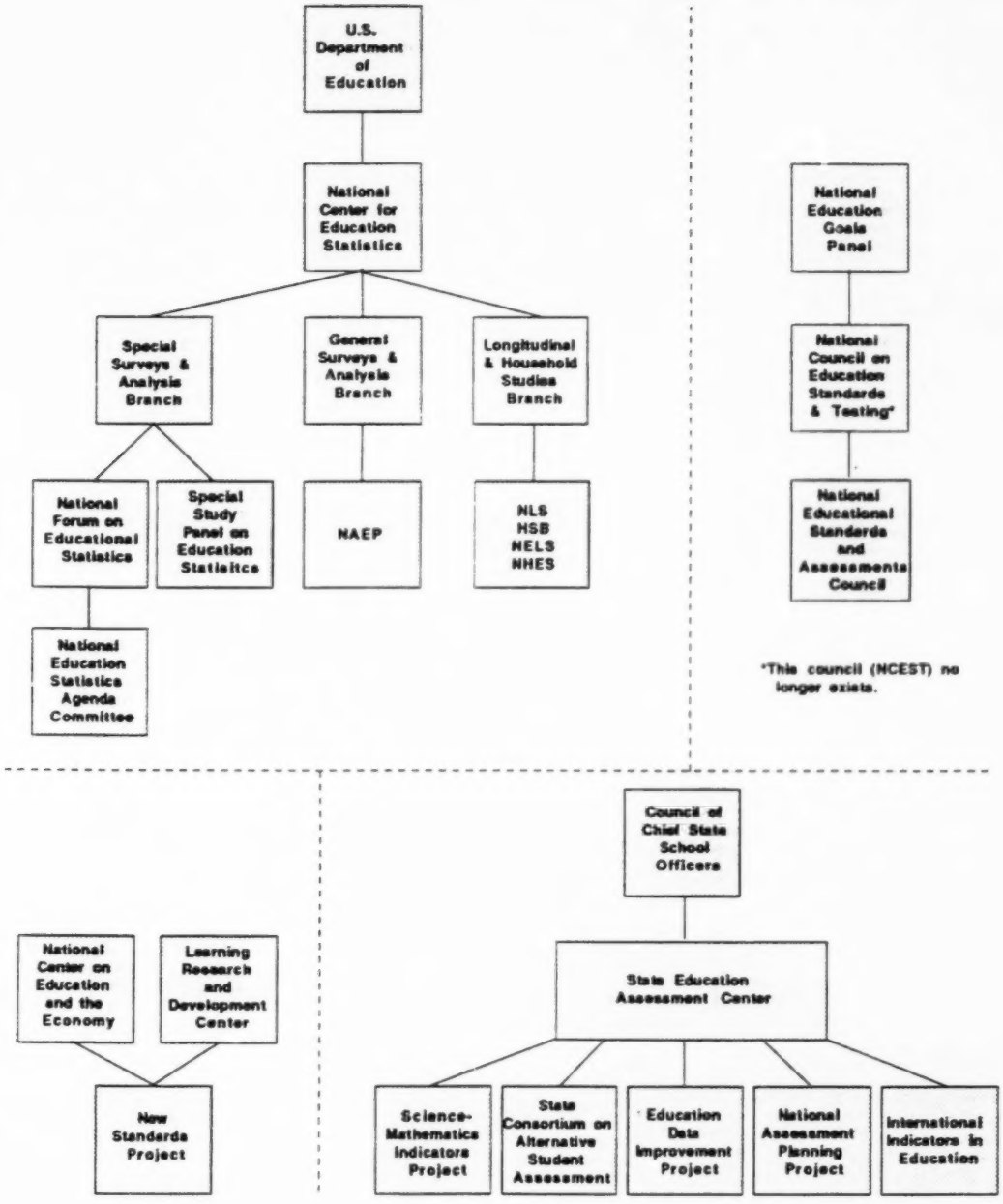
U.S. Department of Education
National Center for Education Statistics
Special Surveys & Analysis Branch
General Surveys & Analysis Branch
Longitudinal & Household Studies Branch
National Forum on Educational Statistics
Special Study Panel on Education Statistics
NAEP
NLS
HSB
NELS
NHES
National Education Statistics Agenda Committee
National Education Goals Panel
National Council on Education Standards & Testing*
National Educational Standards and Assessments Council
*This council (NCEST) no longer exists.
Council of Chief State School Officers
State Education Assessment Center
National Center on Education and the Economy
Learning Research and Development Center
New Standards Project
Science-Mathematics Indicators Project
State Consortium on Alternative Student Assessment
Education Data Improvement Project
National Assessment Planning Project
International Indicators in Education

Figure 1
Selected Organizations Dealing with Educational Outcomes

American Association for Higher Education (AAHE)

The American Association for Higher Education is an association of administrators, students, faculty, and public officials that works to clarify and help solve important issues in postsecondary education. In the fall of 1985 AAHE sponsored a national conference on assessment. The large attendance at the conference convinced members of the AAHE that assessment had become a national issue in higher education, and in response to this they formed the American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum in September, 1986. Since its inception the Forum has produced many reports relevant to outcomes, indicators, and assessment.

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is one of at least two policy groups external to the U. S. Department of Education that have played a major role in generating interest in developing educational indicators. CCSSO has many projects relevant to educational indicators.

In 1985, CCSSO established the State Education Assessment Center to work toward improving our nation's education information base. The center works to improve the scope, quality, and comparability of data on education, and to improve the publication and use of this information. Each year since 1987, the center has produced State Education Indicators, which provides information on key indicators of education in the states (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1990). Indicators are reported on outcomes, inputs or policies, and background or context.

One of the projects conducted within the Council's State Education Assessment Center is the Science-Mathematics Indicators Project directed by Rolf Blank. This project is developing state-level indicators of key dimensions of elementary-secondary education in science and mathematics. In 1990 the project released State Indicators of Science and Mathematics Education, a collection of data on indicators of science and math education gathered from state directors of education and from the Schools and Staffing Survey of the National Center for Education Statistics (Blank & Dalkilic, 1990).

Another project working within the Council's State Education Assessment Center is the State Consortium on Alternative Student Assessment. CCSSO founded the Consortium to help those states that are attempting to develop and implement performance-based assessments. The Consortium is also developing a "national performance assessment exercise pool" to gather and exchange items and exercises developed by the states and other organizations.

Other projects within the CCSSO State Education Assessment Center that are relevant to the identification and development of outcomes are:

- Education Data Improvement Project
- International Indicators in Education
- National Assessment Planning Project

CCSSO joined with the American Public Welfare Association to form a project called "Joining Forces." This project promotes cooperation among the education, welfare, and child welfare systems to better serve disadvantaged children and families. The project provides information on "exemplary" collaborative programs and consultation on how to begin such programs.

In 1991 the Joining Forces project convened a workshop of policymakers and citizens to develop a statement of 12 to 15 outcomes or indicators for children and families. The initiative, called Setting the Agenda, is intended to help focus discussion about outcomes and indicators among policymakers. A report from the "Setting the Agenda" initiative is scheduled for release in the fall of 1992.

Center for Research in Evaluation Standards and Student Testing (CRESST)

In 1985 the Center for the Study of Evaluation at the University of California-Los Angeles was awarded a five year grant to operate the Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST). CRESST was created to improve the quality of education through the research and development of student assessments. In November of 1990 the Education Department awarded the Center a $14.3 million grant to continue operating for an additional 5 years. Presently, CRESST is involved in a variety of projects related to alternative assessment. These include the creation of new models of alternative assessment and the development of a data base of information about on-going and newly developed alternative assessment practices (Baker & Linn, 1991).

National Center for Fair and Open Testing (FairTest)

The National Center for Fair and Open Testing (FairTest) is a non-profit organization advocating educational testing reform. FairTest is working to end what it sees as the misuses and flaws of standardized testing and to make sure that the evaluation of students is fair and accurate. The center was founded in 1985 on four principles:

- Tests should be fair and valid
- Tests should be open
- Tests should be viewed in their proper perspective
- Alternative assessment instruments should be developed

In 1991 the Center produced a 32-page guide for parents and policymakers on how standardized tests are used and misused (see Standardized Tests and Our Children: A Guide to Testing Reform).

National Forum on Educational Statistics (Forum)

The Hawkins-Stafford Education Amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-297) gave the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) the authority to establish a National Cooperative Education Statistics System. The purpose of the System is to produce and maintain, with cooperation from the states, education information and data useful for policymaking. The National Forum on Educational Statistics (Forum) was created by NCES as the agency to implement the Cooperative System. Members of Forum are representatives of all states, territories, major federal education departments, and national educational organizations. The Forum is divided into five committees. One of these, the National Education Statistics Agenda Committee (NESAC) serves to guide the entire Forum and future policy toward "education-relevant" agenda items. In October, 1990, NESAC released a report entitled, A Guide to Improving the National Education Data System (National Forum on Educational Statistics, 1990). The report contains 36 recommendations for improving the education statistics system. These recommendations are organized according to the type of data -- demographic, resources, processes, and outcomes.

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Special Study Panel on Education Indicators (Indicators Panel)

The Special Study Panel on Education Indicators (Indicators Panel) was also established under authorization of the Hawkins-Stafford Act. Its purpose was to make recommendations about the future determination of educational indicators. The Indicators Panel was comprised of 19 members appointed by the Secretary of Education and was chaired by Alan Morgan, Governor of New Mexico. Its charter to address future-oriented issues ended with the publication of its report to Congress, originally scheduled for May, 1991, but actually published in September, 1991. There were three designated workgroups within the Panel (A,B,C), each addressing selected issues (e.g., readiness for school; educational equality for children at-risk of school and societal failure; quality of schools and educational experiences; acquisition, appreciation of, and engagement in subject matter; advanced academic/thinking and citizenship skills; educational contributions to economic productivity--quality of the workforce, international competitiveness, issues of the labor market--and societal support for schools and learning).

In its guidelines for the Special Study Panel, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) noted that educational indicators could provide information concerning: (1) outcomes (e.g., achievement, attainment, postsecondary experiences, beyond school experience), (2) input (e.g., resources, teacher quality, quality of curriculum), (3) process (e.g., attendance, instructional strategies, individual allocation of time, expectations, commitment and effort, support services, extracurricular activities, personalization, school climate), and (4) context (e.g., student characteristics, district/school characteristics). It was noted that the panel members should clarify the nature of indicators for use at the national level, for use as state-by-state indicators, and for use as district and school indicators. It was also emphasized that decisions on measurement should be tied to the educational goals, and should provide clear criteria for the interpretation and use of the data. Further, NCES recommended that the Special Study Panel give consideration to future composite indicators that capture "a particularly significant aspect of schooling or an emerging area of policy interest" (Special Study Panel on Education Indicators, 1990). Examples of areas for composite indicators included an index of "at-riskness" and a "gross national educational product."

In February, 1990, the Special Study Panel on Educational Indicators held a working group meeting to structure "candidate indicators" according to logical groups and degrees of disaggregation (e.g., local, state, national). Other possible breakdowns included: (a) level of governance (preschool, elementary, etc.), (b) location (rural, suburban, urban), and (c) other demographic factors (race, SES). Indicator groups included: inputs, context, process, resources, demographics, and outcomes. The non-exclusiveness of some variables was also a key issue. For example, school climate may be considered a possible process or a possible outcome. The work focused on a conceptual level for each of the indicator groups. The working group raised several key concerns with respect to particular indicators. For example, if outcome data can be expanded to include nearly any measurable variable, at what point are enough data collected? Further, appropriate assessment (e.g., cross-sectional versus longitudinal) and instrumentation (methodology, analysis) for particular indicators was questioned. Finally, the group stressed that a core group of indicators common to all levels of disaggregation (once agreed upon) would be important to provide a compatible connecting data base. A long-term commitment to the indicators that are adopted was seen as essential.

In September, 1991, the Special Study Panel on Educational Indicators (1991) released it's report, Education Counts. The panel recommended that an indicator information system should be created that is based on six issue areas: learner outcomes (acquisition of knowledge, skills, and dispositions), quality of educational institutions, readiness for school, societal support for learning, education and economic productivity, and equity (resources, demographics, and students at risk). The panel believed that these six issue areas were consistent with the education goals of President Bush and the Governors, but also that they go beyond the goals in some respects. The Panel also recommended that the Education Department change it's data collection activities to create a new "indicator information system." Such a system would include a biennial report documenting progress in each of the six issue areas. This would replace The Condition of Education report (Ogle, Alsalam, & Thompson, 1991) now issued on a yearly basis by NCES.

National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB)

The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) is the group of educators, policymakers, and citizens responsible for setting policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress and other national data collection programs. The 24 member panel, appointed by the Education Department, is chaired by Richard Boyd, the former state superintendent of education in Mississippi. Its policy setting activities include decisions about whether to conduct state-based assessments for state comparisons, whether to designate proficiency levels for NAEP tests, and whether to establish new groups to work on such activities as developing a national assessment system.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

The current vehicle for national and state-by-state assessment of educational indicators is the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), administered since 1983 by Educational Testing Service (ETS). While NAEP has monitored trends in U.S. education since 1969, it was not until 1983 that the focus of the assessment was defined as information relevant to policymakers. In 1988, Congress ratified a two-stage trial by NAEP of voluntary participation of states in assessments using comparable indicators. Many interacting forces led to this trial assessment (scheduled for 1990 and 1992). For example, the Council of Chief State School Officers (1987) wanted state-by-state education indicators and the National Governors' Association (1986) had called for better report cards. Furthermore, there was the recognition that the "wall chart," originally produced by Secretary of Education Bell, provided shaky indicators of cognitive outcomes (since it relied on average scores of college-bound high school seniors on the Scholastic Aptitude Test and the American College Test).

In May, 1991, the National Assessment Governing Board adopted mathematics achievement proficiency levels for NAEP. These levels were descriptions of what students should know and be able to do by grades 4, 8, and 12, as measured by NAEP. For each grade there are three levels: basic, proficient, and advanced. Examples of NAEP levels are listed in Table 2.

In June, 1991, results from the NAEP 1990 test of 4th, 8th, and 12th grade mathematics and results from the 1990 voluntary state assessment of 8th grade mathematics were released. Thirty-seven states, the District of Columbia, and two territories participated in the voluntary assessment of 8th grade mathematics. Performance varied from state to state, but overall performance remained low (National Center for Education Statistics, 1991). The report prompted Education Secretary Lamar Alexander to declare a math emergency in the nation's schools.

Table 2

Examples of NAEP Mathematics Achievement Levels

Definitions

Basic
Denotes partial mastery of the knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work in grades 4, 8, and 12.

Proficient
Represents solid academic performance and competency over challenging subject matter.

Advanced
Represents superior performance beyond proficient grade-level mastery.

Examples

Grade 8 Basic	The eighth grade student performing at the basic level should be able to identify and use the correct operations for solving one- and two-step problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers and decimals. These students should also have an understanding of place value and order of operations, and a conceptual understanding of fractions. They should be able to use a calculator and estimation to arrive at answers to simple problems. Basic eighth grade students can use rulers to calculate the perimeter and area of rectangular figures, and make conversions between units of measure within a given system of measurement. These students should be able to use basic geometric terms and identify elementary geometric figures. They should be able to read, interpret, and construct bar graphs and evaluate or solve simple linear equations involving whole numbers.
Grade 8 Proficient	Students at the proficient level should be able, with and without a calculator, to solve problems requiring decimals, fractions, and proportions. They should be able to compute with integers. They should be able to classify geometric figures based on their proportions. Proficient eighth grade students should be able to read, interpret, and construct line and circle graphs and show understanding of the basic concepts of probability. These students should be able to translate verbal problem situations into simple algebraic expressions and identify symbolic algebraic expressions representing linear situations.
Grade 8 Advanced	Eighth grade students performing at the advanced level should be able to solve, with and without a calculator, a wide range of practical problems involving percents, proportions and exponents. These students should have a solid conceptual understanding of the interrelationships among fractions, decimals, and percents and their connections with proportions. Eighth grade advanced students should also understand and be able to use scale drawings, metric measurements, volume, and accuracy of measurement. These students should be able to solve problems involving elementary concepts of probability, interpret line graphs, and apply basic geometric properties related to triangles and to perpendicular and parallel lines.

In October, 1991 the National Assessment Governing Board (1991) reported the proportions of students who performed at the "basic," "proficient," and "advanced" levels for grades 4, 8, and 12 in its report The Levels of Mathematics Achievement. Again, this report was based on data from the 1990 NAEP math test, and data from the 1990 trial state assessment program. This is the first time that NAEP reported on how well students were performing rather than reporting just their scores. The "Proficient" level corresponds with that specified for math in national education goal 3.

In January of 1992, a technical subgroup of the National Education Goals Panel (1992) finished a report titled Gauging High Performance: How to Use NAEP to Measure Progress on the National Education Goals. The report concluded that although NAEP is only one part of a comprehensive assessment system, it will probably remain the primary source of information about national education goals 3 and 4, at least until the end of this decade.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Several major policy groups exist within the U. S. Department of Education, particularly within the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Two key groups within NCES were established under authorization of the Hawkins-Stafford Act: (1) the National Forum on Educational Statistics (often referred to as the Forum), particularly one of its committees, the National Education Statistics Agenda Committee (NESAC), and (2) the Special Study Panel on Education Indicators (often referred to as the Indicators Panel). These two groups were established within the Special Surveys and Analysis Branch of the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Statistics.

The Special Surveys and Analysis Branch is one of three branches of NCES. Other branches include General Surveys and Analysis (which includes the National Assessment of Education Progress--NAEP) and Longitudinal and Household Studies (which includes the National Longitudinal Study '72--NLS, High School and Beyond--HSB, the National Education Longitudinal Study, 88--NELS, and the National Household Education Survey). Each year NCES publishes The Condition of Education, which provides data on 30 indicators of education. These indicators are presented in Table 3.

National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST)

The National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST) grew out of the work of the National Education Goals Panel resource groups. When the Goals Panel resource groups recommended national assessments, U.S. legislators called for the establishment of another group to work on the feasibility of national standards and a national assessment.

Essentially, the amendment was offered by Senator Jeff Bingaman to allow educators, representatives of the business community, and parents to provide input into the assessment of education. In June, 1991 the National Council on Education Standards and Testing was formed by Congress and Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander. The Council, made up of 32 educators, testing experts, and policymakers and co-chaired by governors Carroll Campbell and Roy Romer, was charged with examining the desirability and feasibility of national education standards and national tests.

In September, the Council stated that a national assessment system should be created in reading, writing, and math by 1993-94. Rejecting the idea of a national test, however, they stated that states should form groups to develop tests that would then be calibrated against national standards.

Table 3

Indicators of Elementary and Secondary Education

I. **Student Progression and Outcomes**

Beginnings, Progress, and Completions
Enrollment rates in preprimary education
Enrollment below model grade for 8- and 13-year-olds
Dropout rates and late completions
High school completion

Student Performance
Reading proficiency by 9-, 13-, and 17-year olds
Writing proficiency in grades 4, 8, and 11
U.S. history and civics proficiency
International proficiency in mathematics and science
College entrance examination scores

Economic Outcomes
Transition from school to work
Employment of young adults
Annual earnings of young adults

Student Participation in Various Curricula
Special education enrollment in generally supported programs
Mathematics and science course-taking patterns
Student use of computers

II. **Context**

Size and Growth of the Schools
Selected characteristics of preprimary enrollment
Distribution of elementary and secondary school enrollment

Student Characteristics
Racial and ethnic distribution of enrollment
Children in poverty
Working while in high school
Eighth grade students with risk factors

School Climate
Student drug and alcohol use: Opinions of eighth grade students and teachers
Eighth grade student and teacher perceptions of problems in schools
Perceptions of problems in the public schools: 1970-1990

III. **Resources**

Fiscal characteristics
National index of public school revenues
International comparisons of public expenditures for elementary and secondary education

Teachers and Administrators
Average annual salary of public school teachers
Characteristics of teachers and school administrators
Teacher attrition in public and private schools
Certification and education of full-time public secondary school teachers

In January of 1992, the National Council on Education Standards and Testing released Raising Standards for American Education, which reiterated many of the propositions put forth in September. The Council stated again that it is not proposing a national curriculum nor a single national test, but rather the creation of high national education standards and a system of voluntary assessments developed by the states that could provide comparable results. The two part system would consist of individual student assessments and a large-scale representative sampling and would be overseen by the Goals Panel and a 21-member council made up of public officials, educators, and the general public. The 21-member council would be appointed by the Goals Panel.

Another recommendation made by NCEST was that the National Education Goals Panel be re-configured to be politically balanced. Representation would include two members from the Administration, eight governors (three from the same party as the Administration and five from the other party), and four members of Congress, appointed by the majority and minority leadership of the House and Senate.

The Senate approved legislation to implement the Council's recommendations even before the report was released. The House of Representatives, however, held hearings on the proposals before it considered legislation to implement the Council's recommendations (see testimony provided by the Council on Exceptional Children, which highlights the work of NCEO, provided in Appendix A). Among the concerns was that NCEST was calling for performance-based assessments, when such measures are untested on a large scale. There was also concern that school delivery and system performance standards were given lower priority than standards of student performance. Many believe school delivery standards are as importance as student standards. The most vocal objections have come from liberal democrats who fear that national testing would hurt disadvantaged students. However, even those lawmakers not in opposition to national testing have expressed concern about how the tests might be used.

National Education Goals Panel (NEGP)

After the national goals were announced by the President and the governors, a panel was established to issue a "national report card" on education to monitor progress toward the national goals. The National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) originally led by Governor Roy Romer of Colorado and now led by Governor Carroll A. Campbell Jr. of South Carolina, was formed in July of 1990. The Panel includes eight Governors (three from the President's party and five from the opposite political party), two members of the Administration and two members of Congress from each political party.

In January 1991, the Panel announced that it had created six resource groups of educators, business people and technical experts to advise it on options for its annual report card to the nation. The resource groups were given two tasks: identify existing data to use in the first report, scheduled for release in September, 1991, and suggest new measures that might be created for future reports. The groups, which included experts in educational assessment and measurement, focused on the goal areas of (1) school readiness, (2) high school completion, (3) student achievement, (4) mathematics and science achievement, (5) literacy and life-long learning, and (6) safe and drug-free schools. The groups met from January to March of 1991 and reported to the Panel on March 25th (National Education Goals Panel, 1991a).

The group working on school readiness (Goal 1) recommended a system of indicators of five dimensions of readiness: physical well-being, emotional maturity, social confidence, language richness, and general knowledge. The group suggested that information needs to be gathered from both the child and the parents and teachers at three different times: before school, at entrance to school, and during the kindergarten year. They cautioned that the information collected should not be used to label, classify or track individual children.

The group working on high school completion (Goal 2) stated that it is their hope that improvements in measuring student achievement (Goal 3) will reduce the need to use indicators of school completion. The group considers it crucial to report on completion rates of racial and ethnic minority groups as well as factors associated with those completion rates. The group working on student achievement and citizenship (Goal 3) suggested adoption of a national, curriculum-based assessment system that would provide information about meeting Goal 3, and at the same time improve teaching and learning.

The group working on science and mathematics achievement (Goal 4) recommended gathering information in several areas: student achievement in science and mathematics, the strength of science and mathematics education, the background of science and mathematics teachers, and enrollment in science and mathematics degree programs in colleges and universities.

The group working on adult literacy and lifelong learning (Goal 5) suggested that literacy be defined as encompassing a broad range of knowledge and skills. The group recommended, therefore, that a wide range of indicators be used to measure this goal. The group reporting on safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools (Goal 6) stated that attainment of Goal 6 is essential for reaching the other goals.

During April and May of 1991, the Panel members participated in a series of regional forums to discuss the initial suggestions of the Resource Groups. Public comments from the forums and written testimony from individuals and policy groups were then summarized and disseminated to the six Resource Groups for consideration before their final report to the Panel (NCEO written testimony is presented in Appendix B). The report A Guide to Selecting Indicators was presented to the Panel in June (National Education Goals Panel, 1991b). In September, the National Education Goals Panel (1991c) released its first report, The National Education Goals Report 1991: Building a Nation of Learners. This report contains a series of indicators of national and state performance in each goal area. It also stated that although there have been improvements in high school completion, math and science achievement, and drug use in schools, the nation has a long way to go to meet the six education goals. In many areas, however, good information is non-existent or is too inadequate to use in making judgments about progress.

National Education Standards and Assessments Council (NESAC)

The council proposed by NCEST was called the National Education Standards and Assessments Council (NESAC). Its purpose would be to establish guidelines for setting standards and developing assessments. Together, the Goals Panel and the National Education Standards and Assessments Council would evaluate and certify standards and assessments that are developed by private and government agencies.

New Standards Project

The National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), in conjunction with the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh, received twin grants of $1.15 million and $1.3 million to develop a new national examination system for students. In early 1991 the NCEE and the Learning Research and Development Center formed the New Standards Project. The goal of the project is to create a national examination system and not a single national exam. This work is proceeding at the same time as the work of NCEST. Essentially, the New Standards Project continues the work of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, which was originally formed by NCEE in 1989.

The proposed national examination system is being developed in four stages by the New Standards Project. First the Project will establish consensus on frameworks (content standards) for student achievement. The frameworks state what students should know and be able to do in different subject areas. The frameworks would then be used to develop an examination and standards for grading it. The exam would consist of two parts: a performance examination and a cumulative accomplishments component. The cumulative accomplishments component would be a record of students' work across a period of several years.

In the third stage of the New Standards Project, a technique will be developed to calibrate the exam to tests developed by others. Finally, a National Examination Board will be created to (a) judge whether other tests meet the national standard, (b) oversee the calibration process, and (c) update the exam. This, the project believes, would create a national examination system without requiring everyone to use the same exam. The New Standards Project plans to have its assessment system ready for use by 1997.

National Governors' Association (NGA)

Another major policy group involved with indicators of education that is external to the U.S. Department of Education is the National Governors' Association (NGA). NGA worked with the Bush Administration in the initial development of the goal statements during the fall of 1989 and winter of 1990. The six national education goals were announced by the President and the governors in early 1990.

Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)

In April, 1990, the Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) was formed to examine the demands of the workplace and whether young people could meet the demands. In July of 1991 the Commission released it's report, What Work Requires of Schools (SCANS, 1991). This report outlined the skills that high school graduates need for employment and further education, and began to examine ways to assess those skills. The report also recommended that classroom instruction focus more on teamwork, budgeting, explanation, and computer use. SCANS officials stated that they are now focusing on a new assessment for 8th and 12th graders that would be part of a new type of high school credential.

Major Reports Issued in 1991

Numerous reports were published in 1991 (or the immediate months before or after the 1991 year) on issues related to outcomes and indicators of education. The sequence in which these reports was released is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Sequence of Report Releases

Report	Publication Date
State Indicators of Science and Mathematics Education	November, 1989
Standardized Tests and Our Children: A Guide to Testing Reform	Winter, 1990
State Education Indicators: 1990	June, 1990
A Guide to Improving the National Education Data System	October, 1990
Work Keys: National System for Teaching and Assessing Employability Skills	January, 1991
The State of Mathematics Achievement	June, 1991
A Guide to Selecting Indicators	June, 1991
What Work Requires of Schools	June, 1991
From Rhetoric to Action	July, 1991
The National Education Goals Report 1991: Building a Nation of Learners	September, 1991
Education Counts	September, 1991
As Assessment of American Education: The View of Employers, Higher Educators, The Public, Recent Students, and Their Parents	September, 1991
Raising Standards for American Education	January, 1992
Testing in American Schools: Asking the Right Questions	February, 1992

Few of the reports released during 1991 referred to students with disabilities. In this section, we review several reports directly related to outcomes and indicators. In addition to summarizing the reports, we note whether students with disabilities are mentioned.

State Indicators of Science and Mathematics Education

CCSSO's State Indicators of Science and Mathematics Education (Blank & Dalkilic, 1990) is a collection of data on key indicators of science and math education in public schools, gathered from state directors of education and the National Center for Education Statistics' Schools and Staffing Survey. This report organized science and mathematics indicators into six categories: student outcomes, instructional time/participation, curriculum content, teacher supply, demand and quality, educational equity, and school conditions. Indicators of instructional time/participation and curriculum content are grouped together and indicators of educational equity are included in the five other indicators areas. Outcomes from this report are listed in Table 5. Students with disabilities are not mentioned in this report.

A Guide to Improving the National Education Data System

The Forum's A Guide to Improving the National Education Data System (National Forum on Education Statistics, 1990) is the product of a consensus-building process that brought together members of education agencies, at the state and federal levels, and others with an interest in education data. The purpose of this process was to agree on the types of changes that are most important for improving the usefulness of education data. The report included 36 recommendations for improving national data in the areas of demographics (7 recommendations), resources (12 recommendations), processes (6 recommendations), and outcomes (11 recommendations).

The 11 outcome recommendations are listed in Table 6. The Forum recommended that NCES annually report statistics on several subgroups, including students with handicaps. However, students with disabilities were only included as part of the Forum's recommendations for improving data collection in the area of student and community background statistics.

State Education Indicators 1990

This report by CCSSO's State Education Assessment Center (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1990) reports information on a comprehensive set of indicators of states' education systems. Indicators are grouped into three areas: state background characteristics, state policies and practices, and educational outcomes. Major gaps exist in the information, however. Measures of quality of teachers' performance, for example, are not available and will be difficult to obtain. The report also states that direct measures of the proportion of students with disabilities are lacking.

The State of Mathematics Achievement

In June of 1991, the National Center for Education Statistics released The State of Mathematics Achievement, a report of the results of the 1990 NAEP mathematics test of students in grades 4, 8, and 12, and the state voluntary mathematics assessment of students in grade eight. Thirty-seven states, the District of Columbia, and two territories participated in the voluntary assessment. Performance varied from state to state but overall performance remained low. The report prompted Education Secretary Lamar Alexander to declare a math emergency in the nation's schools.

Table 5

Science and Math Indicators

Indicators of Student Outcomes	• State by state data on student achievement in science and mathematics and student attitudes concerning science and mathematics education from NAEP.
Indicators of Curriculum and Instructional Time/Participation	• National commissions and state policy reforms • National studies • Studies of state reform • High school mathematics course taking • High school science course taking • High school course enrollments by grade • Algebra and accelerated mathematics in grade 8 • Enrollments in advanced courses • Elementary class time on science and math • State policies by mathematics course enrollments • State policies and science course enrollments
Indicators of Teacher Supply, Demand, and Quality	• Issues in teacher quality and shortages • State and national policies • Primary vs. secondary assignments of teachers • Age of science and mathematics teachers • Gender of science and mathematics teachers • Race/ethnicity of science and mathematics teachers • Teacher certification by assignment • College majors of teachers
Indicators of School Conditions	• Average class size • Number of teachers and schools per state

Table 6

NESAC Recommendations

Student Achievement	Comparable and uniform student achievement measures (using the State National Assessment of Educational Progress [State-NAEP], if proven valid and reliable) should provide state-by-state comparisons of knowledge in core content areas (reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, and geography) in grades 4, 8, and 12 at least once every 4 years. Knowledge in other subject areas such as literature, music, art, computer applications, and civics should also be periodically assessed to the extent feasible. Differences in performance among important subgroups of students should be examined and reported at the national and state levels. Subgroups should include those traditionally associated with sex, race, and ethnic origin, economic status, and language status. Provision should be made for states, if they wish, to analyze the sample of the student achievement study in their states so that comparisons could be made among education units by significant subgroups. Trends in student performance over time should be reported for all grades and subjects in which the achievement data are collected at the national and state levels. However, reporting trends over time should not restrict the development and use of new assessment forms that tap a broader range of student proficiencies than those typically associated with "paper and pencil" tests. The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), including the NAEP program, should give priority to research, development, and experimentation with new assessment techniques that can provide broader and more sophisticated measures of student performance. State-by-state student achievement measures should include, in each administration, a performance assessment component(s). OERI should enter into cooperative research and development arrangements with state and local large-scale assessment programs. Student achievement results should be scaled in a way that allows comparisons with international achievement measures such as those from the International Assessment of Educational Progress (IAEP) and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Comparisons with international achievement measures should be made on a regular basis in order to monitor progress in meeting the recently developed national education goal adopted by the Governors and the President. Information should be collected on courses of study completed at the time of national and state student achievement assessments so that links might be made between courses/curricula completed and assessment results. Discussion should continue into possible linkages of specified features of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) survey instruments as well as better coordination of the two surveys by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). One possibility is to equate the NELS achievement instruments to the NAEP items.

Table 6 (continued)

NESAC Recommendations

Student Participation and Progression	NCES, in cooperation with state departments of education, should obtain and periodically report comparable state-by-state data on school dropouts and completers by race/ethnicity, sex, and other important subgroups. The specific measures calculated should include: • An annual dropout rate as defined in the NCES Dropout Field Test or as modified by the results of the field test; • A synthetic cumulative dropout rate; and • A school completion rate incorporating, to the extent feasible, the recommendations of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) School Completion Task Force.
Student Status After High School	NCES, in cooperation with other federal agencies and state departments of education, should investigate the feasibility of obtaining and periodically reporting comparable state-by-state data on the following subjects by race/ethnicity, sex, and other important subgroups: • The percentage of high school graduates who enroll in different types of postsecondary institutions within a year of graduation; • The percentage of high school graduates who enter the military within a year of graduation; • The percentage of high school graduates who enter the civilian labor force within a year of graduation; and • The percentage of high school graduates in the civilian labor force who are employed/not employed one year after graduation.
Student Attitudes and Aspirations	OERI should fund special studies related to the regular collection and reporting of data on student attitudes toward education and schooling and their future aspirations. These studies should investigate both the technical validity and reliability of potential statistics of this type and their perceived usefulness for purposes of education policymaking and planning.

Measuring Progress Toward the National Education Goals: A Guide to Selecting Indicators

This report (National Education Goals Panel, 1991b) was written to assist in the selection of indicators for their first report of progress toward achieving the six national education goals. It is based on input obtained from the panel's six resource groups. The guide contains the following information for each goal area:

- Recommendations of the resource groups regarding data to appear in the first report
- A brief summary of the proposed indicator
- NEGP staff summaries of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed indicator
- Identification of issues associated with reporting on the proposed indicator
- Potential alternative or additional indicators
- Potential reporting options

Students with disabilities were included in the objectives to Goal 1, where it was stated that "all disadvantaged and disabled children will have access to high quality and appropriate preschool programs." Recommendations for indicators on this objective included national data available from the Census Bureau, national and state data (for handicapped children) available from the U.S. Department of Education, and national data available from the National Center for Health Statistics Survey of Households.

What Work Requires of Schools

What Work Requires of Schools (SCANS, 1991) is a report from the Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS). The Commission examined the demands of the workplace and whether the young people of today were capable of meeting those demands. It stated that effective job performance is determined by what can be referred to as "workplace know-how." This know-how is made up of five competencies and a three-part foundation and is essential for all students, whether they are going to work or on to higher education. The eight requirements are listed in Table 7. No mention is made of students with disabilities.

From Rhetoric to Action

In July 1991, the National Governors' Association (1991) released From Rhetoric to Action, which outlined current progress in restructuring education at the state level. It began with a discussion of what restructuring means and then reported examples of restructuring efforts currently underway among the states. The report stated that restructuring refers to all students, but no specific mention is made of students with disabilities.

The National Education Goals Report 1991: Building a Nation of Learners

The first major report of the National Education Goals Panel (1991c) was The National Education Goals Report 1991: Building a Nation of Learners. This report presents information on indicators that are currently available to measure progress toward the national education goals. Data that show each state's status in achieving the national education goals are presented. Significant gaps in the data exist, however, and proposals for creating new indicators are summarized.

Table 7

SCANS Foundation Skills and Competencies

A Three-Part Foundation	**Basic Skills**: Reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens and speaks
	Thinking Skills: Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn, and reasons
	Personal Qualities: Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity and honesty
Five Competencies	**Resources**: Identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources
	Interpersonal: Works with others
	Information: Acquires and uses information
	Systems: Understands complex interrelationships
	Technology: Works with a variety of technologies

Students with disabilities are briefly mentioned in the report. In the objectives to Goal 1 (school readiness), it is stated that "all disadvantaged and disabled children will have access to high quality and appropriate preschool programs." The Goals Report indicates that only about half of all preschool children with disabilities attended preschool programs in 1991.

Education Counts: An Indicator System to Monitor the Nation's Educational Health

In September, 1991 the Special Study Panel released Education Counts (Special Study Panel on Education Indicators, 1991). This report outlined the panel's vision of how an incicator system should be developed and provided recommendations for improving the federal data collection and reporting system. The panel discussed the issue of including students with disabilities by stating that it rejects the idea of a different set of expectations for different groups. Instead, all students should be encouraged and helped to meet the expectations set for all students.

Raising Standards for American Education

In early 1992, the National Council on Education Standards and Testing produced a report entitled Raising Standards for American Education. In this report, NCEST indicated that it is not proposing a national curriculum nor a single national test, but rather the creation of high national education standards and a system of voluntary assessments developed by the states that could provide comparable results. The Council also recommended that states establish school delivery and system performance standards. The two-part system would consist of individual student assessments and a large-scale representative sampling, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The system would be overseen by the Goals Panel and a 21-member council made up of public officials, educators, and the general public, and appointed by the Goals Panel.

Standardized Tests and Our Children: A Guide to Testing Reform

This guide, produced by the National Center for Fair and Open Testing (1990) includes a review of how standardized tests are used, a brief definition and history of standardized tests, a discussion of the problems associated with standardized tests, and a short section on better ways to evaluate students. Issues relevant to students with disabilities are discussed, but there is no specific mention of students with disabilities in this report.

Assessment of American Education: The View of Employers, Higher Educators, The Public, Recent Students, and Their Parents

This report, published in September, 1991 by the Harris Education Research Center (1991), a subsidiary of Louis Harris and Associates, summarizes the findings of a study that examined students', parents', and American employers' opinions of American elementary and high school education. An important component of the report is a list of 15 attributes of preparedness that are the basic objectives of secondary education, and which, the authors claim, enable students to perform well in higher education or on the job. The 15 attributes are listed in Table 8. No mention is made of students with disabilities in this report.

Table 8

Fifteen Attributes of Preparedness

High School Students for Higher Education	• Being able to work cooperatively with fellow students and faculty • Having a good attitude toward their teachers • Learning how to dress and behave well • Having both the desire to learn more and the capacity to keep learning more as they move to higher levels of education • Having a good attitude in dealing with the pressure of meeting academic standards • The ability to read and understand written and verbal instructions • Learning how to read well • Being capable of doing arithmetic functions • Being motivated to give all they have to stretching their minds and learning new disciplines • Learning mathematics well • Having a real sense of dedication to learning • Having the capacity to concentrate on their studies over an extended period of time • Having real discipline in their work habits • Learning how to write well • Learning how to solve complex problems
High School Students for the Job Market	• Being able to work cooperatively with fellow employees • Having both the desire to learn more and the capacity to keep learning more on the job • Good attitude in dealing with those under them • Learning how to dress and behave well • Having a good attitude toward supervisors • Ability to read and understand written and verbal instructions • Having the capacity to concentrate on the work done over an extended period of time • Learning how to read well • Motivated to give all they have to the job they are doing • Being capable of doing arithmetic functions • Learning mathematics well • Having a real sense of dedication to work • Having real discipline in their work habits • Learning how to write well • Learning how to solve complex problems

Testing in American Schools: Asking the Right Questions

This summary report was produced in 1992 by the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) to examine testing in American schools at a time when "holding schools and teachers 'accountable' has increasingly become synonymous with increased standardized testing" (p.2). It covers a wide range of topics, including the functions of testing, the use and consequences of testing, new testing technologies, cost considerations, and federal policy concerns. In its discussion of ways that Congress can "encourage" appropriate test use, the report cites the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and its explicit provisions on the use of tests (e.g., performance on more than a single test is needed to make decisions; tests must be validated for the purpose for which they are used, etc.). Otherwise, specific issues related to testing modifications, inclusion, and other topics related to testing students with disabilities are not addressed in the OTA summary report.

Work Keys: National System for Teaching and Assessing Employability Skills

Late in 1991, the American College Testing Program released information on the development of a new assessment designed to examine both the specific skills required by jobs and a person's job-related skills. An employability skills matrix includes academic skills (reading, computation, writing, problem solving/critical reasoning, scientific reasoning) and people/personal skills (organizational effectiveness/ leadership, interpersonal/negotiation/teamwork, motivation and self development, listening and oral communication, ability to learn). It is proposed that personal profiles can be matched with job profiles, with the end goal being both (1) making decisions about appropriate jobs, and (2) identifying areas of skills needing additional development. Development of the materials for generating profiles is occurring during 1992. Although individuals with disabilities are not mentioned specifically in the informational materials, the statement is made that "Work Keys will be especially useful in addressing the needs of the 'forgotten half' -- high school students who are neither college-bound nor in traditional vocational programs" (p. 2).

Summary

The year 1991 and the months immediately preceding and following it have proved to be a time of tremendous activity in education. Some groups started new activities, while other groups completed activities. New groups were formed. The focus of activities during this time period began to move away from complaints about the status of education toward identification of educational standards, the consideration of national standards and testing, and the investigation of alternative approaches to assessment.

In some cases, special education was identified as having a leadership role to fulfill in suggested educational reforms. For example, special education was viewed as having an exemplary set of provisions on the use of tests (OTA, 1992). Some groups (e.g., NCEST, NEGP, NCEST) began to ask the community of disability representatives about their views and with requests for their input on how best to include students with disabilities in their efforts. For example, when NCES was considering its 1992 data collection for the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), it requested input on the kinds of information that should be obtained about students with disabilities who were excluded from its data collection. Recommendations provided to them on this question were considered and accepted (see Table 9 for old and new information on excluded students).

Table 9

NELS Information on Excluded Students

Base Year (1988) Ineligibility Codes	• Attended sampled school only on a part-time basis, primary enrollment at another school • Physical disability precluded student from filling out questionnaires and taking tests • Mental disability precluded student from filling out questionnaires and taking tests • Dropout: absent or truant for 20 consecutive days, and was not expected to return to school • Did not have English as the mother tongue AND had insufficient command of English to complete the NELS:88 questionnaires and tests • Transferred out of the school since roster was compiled • Was deceased
1990 Follow-up Questions for Ineligible Students	• Was student using an Individualized Education Plan, also known as an IEP, during the 1987-88 school year? • Was s/he "mainstreamed" in English or the Language Arts during the 1987-88 school year? • Do you feel that s/he WAS capable (in the 1987-88 school year) of completing a questionnaire designed for students who read at a 6th grade level? • During the 1987-88 school year, was (sample member)'s reading score two or more grade levels below the 8th grade in ENGLISH? • What was (sample member)'s reading score in ENGLISH during the 1987-88 school year? • When (sample member) attended school in the 1987-88 school year, was s/he suffering from any behavior disorder, severe cognitive deficit, or severe physical impairment which would have made it necessary for one to use extraordinary measures to administer the questionnaire, such as oral administration versus self-administration, large print or Braille versions, or other extraordinary special assistance? Please specify the behavior disorder, severe cognitive deficit, or physical impairment. Please specify the extraordinary measure that would be needed to administer a questionnaire. • Records from the 1988 study show that (sample member) was unable to participate because s/he was (give ineligibility status from Base Year listed at top left of Student Tracing Facesheet -- B, D, E, or U). Do records for (sample member) indicate that (sample member) had this disability?
Additional Items in Survey of Ineligible Students in 1992 (Based on NCEO Suggestions)	• Existence of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) • Primary disability listed on the IEP • Educational settings • Amount of time spent in the educational setting • Level of intellectual functioning • Basis for determining the level of intellectual functioning

Although not requested, input was also given to NCES on several other issues, such as who makes eligibility decisions and recommending inclusion in part of the procedures (e.g., survey assessment) despite exclusion from the rest (e.g., achievement assessment).

Another example of a recent request for input is a call for input on background questionnaires that will be used as part of the 1994 administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). This request for input was focused on the Excluded Student form, which had previously been revised to collect expanded information on students with disabilities (see Table 10).

Suggestions in response to the NAEP request were small revisions to get this data collection program more in line with the NELS data collection program. Again, however, suggestions were made and questions were raised about the criteria for excluding students with disabilities, who makes exclusion decisions, and ways to include more students in assessments.

These examples of requests are hopeful signs of a commitment to make assessments inclusive of all students with disabilities. There are many difficult issues that will need to be addressed as responses are made, such as what testing accommodations are appropriate and acceptable to all in assessment, does "all" mean "all" students, who should make decisions, and many others as well.

Continued monitoring of policy groups and the reports being produced by them is necessary for those in special education to keep on top of the reform agenda and issues that need to be addressed by them. NCEO will continue these activities throughout the 1992 year.

Table 10

NAEP Information on Excluded Students

Excluded Student Questionnaire Items Relevant to Disability (1992)	• Why is this student excluded from NAEP survey? [A disability (physical or mental); both a disability and limited English proficiency; nonreader but does not have a disability or limited English proficiency]
	• What functional grade level has this student achieved in reading English?
	• What functional grade level has this student achieved in mathematics?
	• What percentage of the school day does this student spend in a regular class (i.e., mainstream) setting?
	• Which of the following best describes this student's disability [Multidisabled, Mentally retarded, Hard of hearing, Deaf, Speech-impaired, Visually handicapped/blind, Deaf/blind; Emotionally disturbed; Orthopedically impaired; Learning disabled; Other]
	• How would you describe this student's condition? [Profound; Severe; Moderate; Mild]
	• What percentage of the school day is this student served by a special education program?
	• Is this student currently receiving instruction in any of the following areas as part of a special education program? [Language development; Reading; Mathematics; Speech; Self control and deportment; Personal care and basic life skills; Vocational education]
Recommendations Provided for NAEP 1994	• Modify wording so that it is clear that "disability" is not restricted to "physical and mental disabilities"
	• Modify categories to the current categories of disability used by the Office of Special Education Programs, and ask for the student's primary disability
	• Add items to get at intellectual functioning and personal functioning
	• Add items to obtain better information on the educational setting in which students with disabilities are receiving most of their special education services.

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Appendix A

Council of Exceptional Children Testimony

STATEMENT OF

THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

To

THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

of the

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

with respect to

THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON EDUCATION STANDARDS AND TESTING

March 18, 1992

Presented by:

Dr. Leonard Rezmierski
Superintendent
Northville Public Schools
Northville, Michigan and
Governor at Large, U.S.,
The Council for Exceptional Children

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Mr. Chairman, I am Leonard Rezmierski and I am currently superintendent for the Northville Public Schools in Northville, Michigan. I also currently hold the position of Governor at Large, U.S., in the leadership of The Council for Exceptional Children.

We thank the Chairman and the distinguished members of the House Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education for the opportunity to testify regarding the past and future work of the National Council on Education Standards and Testing. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) representing over 52,000 professionals and others concerned with the education of infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities as well as children and youth who are gifted, strongly supports improving educational outcomes for all of America's students. Our membership is comprised of professionals from many disciplines who provide a unique knowledge base from which to offer comment and recommendations.

For the past several years, beginning with the 1983 report, A Nation at Risk, there has been a nationwide focus on restructuring and improving our nation's schools. More recently, the call for "world class standards" has gathered momentum. When President Bush announced his reform plans in America 2000, the discussion about national standards and national tests intensified. We commend the Congress for passing the legislation which brought together the members of the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST). The deliberations and report of NCEST bring forth many of the sensitive issues involved in establishing national standards and testing.

CEC has followed with interest the deliberations of NCEST. We believe that they thoughtfully addressed the questions asked of them, both in the authorizing legislation as well as in the September 23, 1992, letter from you, Mr. Chairman, in conjunction with your colleagues, Representative Goodling and Senator Hatch. We were especially pleased with your September 23 letter since it addressed many specific concerns which we also share, such as how national standards and tests would impact on educationally disadvantaged children, children with disabilities, and children with limited English proficiency. We agree with the Congress that if we are to have national standards and national tests that they must be inclusive of all America's students. There should be no misunderstanding that "all students" includes students with disabilities and other students who may experience learning difficulties. Of particular concern to us are the special needs of students with disabilities, students who are gifted and students who are culturally diverse or whose primary language is not English.

We will focus the rest of our testimony on how three key areas of the NCEST report would impact on students with exceptionalities: world class standards, national assessments and a coordinating structure. We are pleased that there is an individual on the panel who will address the impact of these issues on students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.

World Class Standards

The setting of "world class standards" causes us more than a little anxiety since we believe that if national standards are to be set, they must be fair to all students. We strongly believe that educational outcomes for all students need to be improved. And, we strongly believe that if world class standards are to be set, they must be inclusive of all learners; therefore challenging all students to improve their performance. As a result, we support the Council's intent in recommending the establishment of national standards as a means to "raise the ceiling for students who are currently above average and to lift the floor for those who now experience the least success in school, including those with special needs." Our very strong concern, however, is that the setting of standards is arbitrary--there is no empirical evidence that can tell us what world class standards are and what students should know, and when. Furthermore, given that various professional organizations and groups are involved in the setting of standards, there is no policy which requires these groups to set standards which will challenge our most able students as well as those with special learning needs. There is much diversity among learning needs, styles, and capabilities of students in our schools. As a result, we believe that the standards must be flexible in order to be realistic, in order for students to be appropriately challenged, and in order to ensure that improved learning is recognized. For instance, the standards must be rigorous enough for our students who are gifted, challenging enough for the majority of our students, and flexible yet challenging for students with disabilities. However, this does not mean that we support the differential treatment of students based on a student's ability to learn. The groups setting standards must address the issue of how world class standards will accommodate all students.

The issue of including all students in performance standards, yet ensuring that the performance standards are realistic for all students, must be further studied. The Standards Task Force of NCEST proposed one possible approach by having a "scale of student performance standards." Another alternative may be to view standards in the core subjects as dimensional and acknowledge that development and learning occur incrementally over time; hence, students will achieve the standards at varying rates. Further, if curriculum frameworks tied to the standards are in place, then teachers and students will have guidance in working towards the standards. We do not know if either of these proposals are the answer, but we do know, for example, that a gifted student can achieve a much higher content standard in mathematics than a student with a mental disability. However, we believe that both should be held to their individual "highest standard" to ensure that both students are challenged to learn. They both should be expected to achieve.

Permit us to offer another example: Will students with severe disabilities be expected to meet world class standards in the five core subjects? If yes, will they be expected to reach the same standards as the majority of the school age population? If not, what performance standards will they be expected to meet? We cannot accept an answer that students with severe disabilities are "exempt" from meeting world class standards.

As an alternative, we strongly encourage the acknowledgement that achievement of world class standards in the core subjects by all students may not be appropriate, nor relevant to their post-school activities. As a result, we strongly urge you to support the establishment of measurable standards which are relevant to everyone's post-school activities, namely standards that focus on ensuring "that all students learn to use their minds well so they will be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment", as stated in National Education Goal Three.

We believe that one of the goals of the education system is to provide students with the "tools" needed to live productive, independent lives. The setting of measurable standards in these areas would support Goal Three, would be relevant to all students, and would help to make U.S. students competitive in our changing world. Examples of such standards are: standards for achievement of independent living, standards for vocational skills that lead to productive and secure employment, and standards for lifelong learning.

CEC was very pleased that NCEST recommended that standards be set in areas other than the five core subjects. We strongly agree with this recommendation. We are concerned that if standards are set only in English, mathematics, history, science, and geography, such a baseline may lead to a narrowing of the curriculum, which would have quite a negative impact on students with disabilities as well as those who are gifted. When working with students with severe disabilities, it may be more important to teach the student independent living skills or a vocational skill rather than algebra. Or, other students, including s' 'ents who are gifted, may also need the challenge of subjects outside c .e core subjects, such as foreign languages, performing arts, communication arts, and higher order thinking skills and problem-solving. We encourage the Subcommittee to stress the benefits of a diverse curriculum.

If the members of the Subcommittee support the development of national standards, we strongly agree with the NCEST recommendation that the standards be developed through a broad-based process that involves educators (including teachers), parents, students, business people and the public. If such a process is followed, those with expertise in working with students who are gifted as well as those who work with students with disabilities can provide input. Our concern, however, is that such broad based input will not be sought. For example, it seems that everyone concerned with the setting of standards cites the work of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the process that they followed. We have observed much deserved praise for the association and the work it has done, but we have not observed discussion respecting whether or not there should be a broad base of input if these are to become "national standards." Were individuals who teach students who are gifted or students with disabilities involved in the setting of these standards? If not, will there be an opportunity for "broad based" input before the standards are declared "national?"

CEC strongly supports the recommendation of the NCEST that school delivery standards and system performance standards be established. We cannot support the setting of standards for students without also requiring schools and school systems to be responsible for ensuring that all students have an opportunity to learn.

CEC is disappointed that the NCEST allows for each state to select the criteria it will use for assessing a school's capacity and performance when determining the school delivery standards. We understand and support the NCEST desire to affirm the individual state responsibility for education, but we are concerned that such flexibility will allow states to have "weak" school delivery standards. If students must meet world class standards, school delivery standards must also be world class. We much prefer the definition and accountability required of the school delivery standards as outlined in the Standards Task Force report than the language adopted by the NCEST in its final report. Given the widely acknowledged inequality across America's public school systems, we contend that it would be unfair and impossible to hold students to the same set of performance and content standards without seeking to ensure that equity is present through uniform delivery standards. All students must have an equal opportunity to learn and to improve performance.

Assessment

CEC has grave misgivings about the development of national assessments. However, if national assessments are to be developed, the system must include all students. Much of our concern stems from the fact that many states currently exclude many students with disabilities from testing. Part of the reason for excluding students with disabilities is that states have technical problems assessing this population (i.e., providing alternative forms of assessment); but another part of the reason for excluding such students is the desire to raise the states' overall test scores. Given that an estimated 4.5 million students receive special education services, the practice of exclusion cannot be allowed in any type of assessment system.

The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) at the University of Minnesota, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, is working to define domains of learning and develop a model of desired educational outcomes and a system of outcome indicators that apply not only to students with disabilities, but to all of America's students. This model will provide a progressive approach for looking at student performance and a truly inclusive way of assessing the progress of all students.

One of the ongoing activities of the National Center is to identify technical issues that need to be addressed as policy makers move toward greater assessment of educational outcomes for students with disabilities. While a variety of issues have been cited, the two most critical issues identified are inclusion/exclusion decisions and modification of tests. These two issues were also identified as critical facts when the Center looked at national and state data bases for existing information on students

with disabilities. Some of the findings, discussed in the Report on the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in National and State Data Collection Systems, are quite disturbing. Among the findings:

- As currently designed, most of the existing state and national data collection programs exclude large portions of the student population with disabilities. At the national level, it is estimated that approximately 40% to 50% of all school-age students with disabilities are excluded from the most prominent national data collection programs (e.g., National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP], National Education Longitudinal Study [NELS]) that are playing a critical role in the evaluation of the current reform initiatives.

- Reasons typically given for exclusion of students with disabilities range from concerns about providing proper accommodations to concerns about the potential aversiveness of the assessment situation for the student.

- A sizable portion of excluded students should not have been excluded from data collection programs and could readily participate (some with testing accommodations, others without), in such data collection programs.

- The exclusion of students with disabilities from state and national data collection programs occurs at a number of different stages: (a) during the development of assessment instruments; (b) when the data are collected; and (c) during the analysis, interpretation, and reporting of the results.

- The ability to extract useful national and state policy-relevant information on the outcomes of students with disabilities from national and state data collection programs is seriously hampered by the extensive exclusion of portions of this population. The exclusion of students with disabilities results in significant problems in obtaining representative samples. This, in turn, creates difficulties in estimating national and state level statistics (e.g., dropout rates) and in completing accurate policy studies.

The findings of the National Center are important to consider if we are to develop a national assessment system. First, if the purpose of the system is to help the nation track our progress towards meeting the performance standards, all students must be included if we are to acquire an accurate and complete national portrait. Secondly, students with disabilities must be included in efforts to develop the national assessments. Only if such students are included in test development will we learn what items or test administration procedures may need to be dropped or modified in order to accommodate any special needs.

Given the status and emphasis that is placed on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), it is troubling that so many of our nation's students are excluded from this test. If the NAEP can exclude 40% to 50% of students receiving special education support and yet be heralded as an

effective indicator for measuring the Nation's educational progress, what guarantee do we have that a new national assessment system won't also be allowed to exclude large numbers of the student population?

Perhaps the most valuable long-term contribution that the National Center can offer us is the work which it is doing in the area of identifying educational outcomes for all students. The Center is working with approximately 200 stakeholder groups in an effort to develop consensus on a model of outcomes and a comprehensive system of indicators for students.

If we are to have a national assessment system, we strongly support the recommendation of the NCEST that it be a system of "multiple assessments linked to the national standards that will measure the progress of individuals, schools, districts, states, and the Nation." Furthermore, we support having two components: individual student assessments as well as large-scale inclusive sample assessments.

In addition, we believe that there must be formative as well as summative assessments. For example, the summative assessments proposed will tell us how many of our students are achieving the world class standards; formative assessments will tell us the extent to which students are making progress in relation to meeting the standards. Such formative assessments would provide us with data to be used in documenting improvement and in developing a strategy for working with students who have not yet achieved, or who have exceeded, the standards. Such assessments would have policy implications and would provide us with baseline information about how our students are currently performing in relation to the standards.

CEC agrees with the points expressed by the NCEST when addressing individual student assessments. However, we think it is important to add to this list that the individual assessments may need to be administered in more than one way and/or modified to meet the needs of those being assessed. They must also address the broad range of skills required to succeed in work and community settings.

There is a great need for, and we encourage the Subcommittee to support, much more research in the area of alternative forms of assessment as well as in identifying strategies for modifying assessments to ensure that assessments can fairly and accurately determine what an individual knows. Likewise, the assessments need to be open-ended enough to provide all students with opportunities to express the range of their knowledge and skills rather than being limited by "what is asked."

Coordinating Structure

CEC strongly urges the Subcommittee to support the NCEST recommendation that a new entity, the National Education Standards and Assessments Council, be established to work with a reconfigured National Education Goals Panel, to certify standards and criteria for assessments. CEC was pleased with the membership and functions that NCEST recommended for such a new entity. Our concern with such an entity, however, is that at least one member of the Council have expertise in working with individuals with disabilities and

those who are gifted. We believe that this is an essential requirement if our schools are to achieve the accommodations mandated by the Congress through the Americans with Disabilities Act. Unless such expertise is represented on the Council, it would be possible for a set of standards or an assessment to be certified without anyone ever asking, "Is this inclusive of all students?"

We also wish to express a sense of urgency regarding the formation of the National Education Standards and Assessments Council. Given that the Office of Educational Research and Improvement has already awarded funding to some groups to develop world class standards, unless the new Council is in place soon, it won't be able to begin advising and guiding the development of the standards.

Closing Thoughts

In closing, we wish to strongly emphasize that we believe the development of standards and national assessments will not in and of themselves improve education in America. We urge the Subcommittee to look closely at all of the pieces of systemic change which must be in place for the schools to meet the challenge of drastically improving the performance of all of our students, especially those who have special learning needs. In particular, teachers must be involved in the reform efforts, both as contributors to what is needed in systemic change (i.e., curriculum development, as decision makers within the schools) as well as recipients of appropriate training, both at the preservice and inservice levels.

We strongly support the work of the Implementation Task Force as it tried to summarize what change needs to occur in the schools in order for all of America's students to have an equal opportunity to learn. We urge the Subcommittee to review the work of the Implementation Task Force as you work to complete your education reform legislation. And, we would again emphasize the importance of achieving equity across the public schools to ensure that all students, especially those with special learning problems and needs (e.g., students who are economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and students who do not speak English as a first language), have an equal opportunity to improve their performance.

We realize that these issues are very complex and will require continued study. We appreciate the time and attention you are taking to understand the implications of national standards and assessments and know that you will continue to provide strong Congressional leadership as we work to improve educational outcomes for all students. Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns, and please know that we are available at all times to assist you in the fulfillment of your legislative responsibilities.

Appendix B

NCEO Written Testimony to NEGP

NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL
Written Public Testimony Form

To have your comments considered by the National Education Goals Panel, please complete this form. You may photocopy it and write front and back, submitting one two-sided page for each goal. You also may submit general comments. Please submit this form by May 12 to:

National Education Goals Panel
Written Public Testimony
1850 M Street, NW, Suite 270
Washington, D.C. 20036

FROM:
Name: Robert Bruininks, Ph.D.
Organization (if any): National Center on Educational Outcomes
Address: 111 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive S.E.
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455
Telephone 612-624-4826 FAX 612-624-9344

SUBJECT: (Check appropriate space)
Goal 1 __ 2 __ 3 __ 4 __ 5 __ 6 __ All X Other _____
Back-up Paper submitted ___ Title _____
Topic: _____
Regional Forum (place, date, if appropriate) _____

We are at a point of opportunity in the history of American education. Our nation is in agreement that our educational system is in need of reform, that significant reform must begin with the identification of clear goals for education, and that we need to identify effective ways to reach these goals. And, regardless of approach, there is consensus that we must assess the extent to which our nation is meeting its national goals. Perhaps never before have we had this much agreement about American education.

The unique opportunity we now have is to make American education reflect the broader perspectives of our society: to recognize the capabilities of all individuals and their right to be educated regardless of their financial status, their cultural roots, or their physical or mental capabilities. As President Bush noted when he and the governors announced the goals for American education at the Educational Summit Meeting in Charlottesville, there is a need to ensure that "no child in America be forgotten or forsaken" and that "this includes both the unusually gifted and those with special needs and disabilities." We have committed ourselves, from the very beginning, to an inclusive educational system, with goals for all of America's students.

More than 4 million students today receive special education services within our public schools. They cannot be excluded from the mainstream of America's classrooms. Likewise, we must not allow their exclusion as we address our national goals and how best to reach them and how best to assess our progress in doing so.

The challenges created by a truly inclusive educational policy are many when it is time to identify potential indicators and measurement strategies. There is a tendency to want to exclude those whom we believe might not be able to take a standardized test, who would achieve low scores on various tests, who couldn't put together a portfolio for assessment review because they don't read or write well, who couldn't communicate without the use of sign language.

Our nation has the resources to problem solve together on how best to include all America's students as it looks to measure progress toward its national goals. We can work together to optimize test-taking situations for all students, to identify appropriate alternative assessments for all students, and to address the issues surrounding the reporting of results in an accurate and fair manner. Resources are available now to help in efforts to make the transition from a policy of exclusion toward a policy of inclusion in our education goals and assessment procedures.

The National Center on Educational Outcomes for Students with Disabilities is one of these resources. It is seeking to promote national discussion of educational goals and policy indicators that are inclusive of students with disabilities. Currently, the Center is working with states, policy groups, persons with disabilities, and others to develop a model of desired outcomes and a system of outcome indicators that apply not only to students with disabilities, but to all of America's students.

Our country's current policy is really one of partial exclusion of certain students from national data sets such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress . While a specific exclusion policy exists for these assessments, the interpretation of the policy varies widely. Thus, we see that in one state, 63% of students with disabilities participate in the NAEP test while in another state only 13% participate. We end up with data that lack the clarity we need to move our nation forward toward meeting its goals. With such practices, schools could eventually exclude 15 to 20 percent of the U.S. school population. It is imperative that the assessment of national educational goals make the needed provision to include all students in order to insure that our schools fairly address, in the words of President Bush, the education of all children, including those with disabilities.

America needs a strategy that comprehensively assesses our progress to assure educational opportunities for all children.. A framework is needed that links important outcomes to the processes and resources of education, so that if one of our outcome measures suggests a problem, we can link back to address the changes needed in our educational programs. This framework for assessing essential educational outcomes should include all of America's students. This is to say that we must recognize individual differences in our system and develop educational evaluation approaches that apply to all students. Our evaluation strategies, moreover, must be flexible and emphasize the full development of all children. This may require that certain outcomes be emphasized or given different weightings for some students. Or we may use different types of indicators for the same outcome, depending on the individual student's characteristics and needs. These are issues that we must directly address, and that the National Center on Educational Outcomes is addressing, as we proceed with our agenda to measure progress toward our goals to improve educational opportunity and results for all students.